The Official Publication of the Alabama Chess Federation

Alabama Chess Antics

Spring 2022

Inside this issue:

2022 Alabama Scholastic Ch. *from uschess.org*	**4**
Headin' South: Azalea City Open 2022 *by Scott Varagona*	**6**
2022 Alabama Senior Championship *by Scott Varagona*	**10**
Alabama Chess Happenings *from various contributors*	**13**
In Memory: Dr. Rose Marie Stutts *by Caesar Lawrence*	**14**
The Vulcan: Crosstables *by Caesar Lawrence*	**14**
The Lost State Champions: Part II (and the Alabama State Champions List) *by Scott Varagona*	**16**
Karagianis-Strout *by Doug Strout*	**31**

The Lost State Champions: Part II

- Q&A with Alabama chess legend Charles Irvine
- New discoveries and a deeper look at 1967-1972
- An updated state champions list: the final word?

Greetings from the Editor

Greetings, folks! Get ready for yet another massive *Antics* packed with news on Alabama chess events. This one weighs in at a whopping 33 pages.

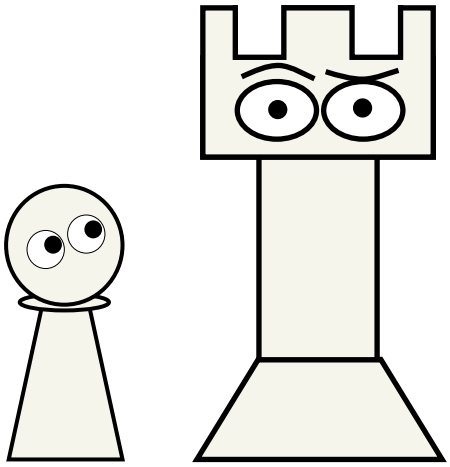
We have reports on the Scholastic Championships, the Azalea City Open, the Senior Championship, the Vulcan, and various other tournaments. Thanks to **Caesar Lawrence**, **Doug Strout**, and **Tom Denton** for their contributions.

This *Antics* also has a very special feature. Thanks to the expansion of the *Antics* archives in the last couple of years, as well as other sources that have appeared unexpectedly, new information about the Alabama State Championship's history has come to light. We need to rethink some of the entries in our state champions list… and trust me, things get complicated. It is once again time for me to write, as Caesar Lawrence puts it, another "Ph.D. dissertation" on Alabama chess history! If you like detective stories, I hope you will read **the Lost State Champions: Part II** and follow me down the rabbit hole as far as it will go. An updated state champions list follows on page 26.

The "Photo of the Quarter" award goes to **Scott Wilhelm** for his Alabama Scholastic Championship photo on the bottom right of page 5. Congratulations to Scott and thanks for always enriching the *Antics* with your stellar photography.

The deadline for submissions for the Summer 2022 issue of the *Antics* is August 10. Please submit photos, games, and articles to the *Antics* via **Alabama.Chess.Editor@gmail.com**.

-Scott Varagona
June 17, 2022



ACF Membership

Any individual may become a **Regular Member** upon the payment of annual dues of **$15.00**. Regular members may enter ACF tournaments and receive special publications or notices from ACF as they are issued. Any chess club seeking to become an **Affiliate** is required to file the Affiliate Information Form with the Secretary of the ACF and pay annual dues of **$35.00**. Benefits of becoming an affiliate include the right to bid to host ACF-sanctioned events, such as the Alabama State Championship, and to receive advertising through the ACF for your tournaments.

Alabama Chess Leaderboard

Top 50 Regular Ratings (retrieved from uschess.org on 6/12/2022)

1	IM STUART RACHELS	2605	26	MILES MELVIN	1984
2	MATTHEW PUCKETT	2282	27	ASHISH ACHARYA	1975
3	SCOTT VARAGONA	2264	28	WILLIAM DANIEL FOX	1973
4	YURY A BARNAKOV	2255	29	OM BADHE	1969
5	AMEER S GHOBRIAL	2214	30	JEFFREY BYRD	1893
6	BILL MELVIN	2213	31	XAVIER BRUNI	1891
7	KEVIN WANG	2206	32	JEFF TOBIN	1886
8	HENRY ROBINSON	2176	33	KENNETH W GOODMAN	1880
9	ZACHARY ISAAC SNOW II	2142	34	MICHAEL W PORCELLI	1870
10	GERALD A LARSON	2133	35	BRIAN C WIGGIN	1862
11	CHIBUZO C ILONZE	2128	36	MICHAEL B GUTHRIE	1862
12	SAMUEL HERAN-BOILY	2117	37	RANDY W COPE	1846
13	STEPHEN J GRAVELING	2113	38	JOHN DAUGHERTY	1837
14	AARON DECORD	2102	39	ROBERT LUBIN	1827
15	BRENT INMAN	2087	40	CAESAR W LAWRENCE	1823
16	JONATHAN RASBERRY	2076	41	SAMUEL G BASKARRAJ	1823
17	ANDY REEDER	2075	42	JOEL NICK FRIEDMAN	1803
18	TEJAS V THORAT	2066	43	TIM BOND	1800
19	SHERWOOD DONG	2065	44	PATRICK DOWD	1799
20	FARUK ESAT ERGIN	2048	45	BIJAN KHALEGHI	1780
21	GEORGE RUSYNIAK	2034	46	RHODES PEELE	1777
22	CONNOR V LUNNEY	2031	47	VIKHRAM BALAGEE	1761
23	THOMAS J DENTON	2016	48	FREDERIC HOLWECK	1748
24	JEREMIAH F DONAHUE	2000	49	ALADDIN S LATEEF	1742
25	CHARLES L MEIDINGER	2000	50	SAMUEL J HUNT	1737

2022 Alabama Scholastic Championships

from uschess.org

Individual Championship:
March 12, 2022; Madison, AL.
Organizer & Chief TD: Todd Guthrie.

High School Championship
1st place: **Isaac Snow**, 4/4

Junior High Championship
1st place: **Xavier Bruni**, 3.5/4

Elementary Championship
Tie for 1st: **Saikarunya Kesireddy**, **Shawn Choi**, **Kylie Zou**, 3.5/4

Primary Championship
1st place: **Esteban Cesc Jerez**, 5/5

High School U1300
Tie for 1st: **Wilson Charles Engeriser**, **Edward Calinsky**, 4/5

Junior High U1000
1st place: **Mokun Ojesina**, 4.5/5

Elementary U500
1st place: **Viraat Satkuri**, 5/5

Primary U300
1st place: **Arush Reddy Batchu**, 5/5.

(For Team Championship results, see alabamachess.org.)

*Many thanks to **Scott Wilhelm** for these incredible photos of the action at the Alabama Scholastic Championships in 2022. Mr. Wilhelm, you've outdone yourself. -Ed* ■

Headin' South: Azalea City Open 2022

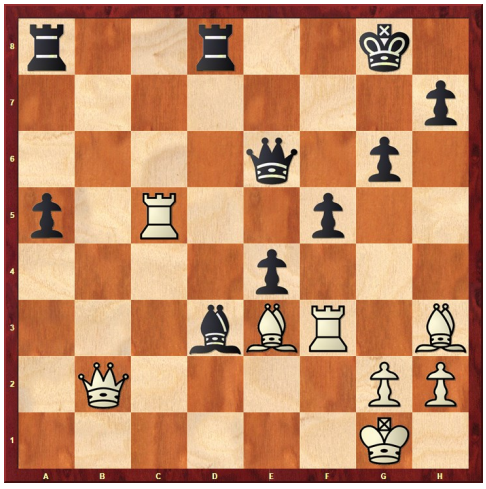
by Scott Varagona

When Tom Denton extended a personal invitation for me to play in the Mobile Chess Club's Azalea City Open—and he even offered to pay my entry fee—how could I refuse? I had not played in Mobile since the 2008 State Championship, and besides: players from Mobile often take the long drive up to play in tournaments in Montgomery or Birmingham. It seemed only right that Birmingham area players like me should return the favor by, to paraphrase Gerald Squires, "headin' south."

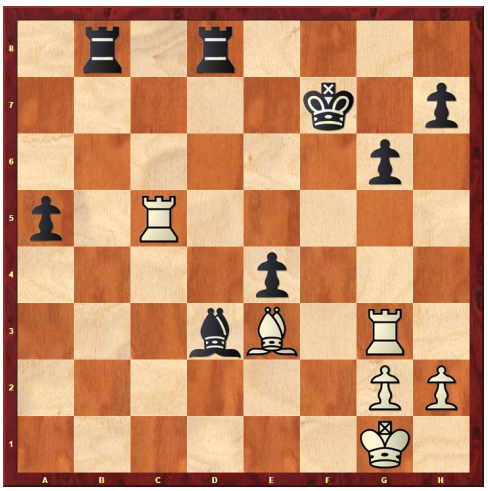
I'm told the Mobile Chess Club has experienced a revival lately and this was reflected in the tournament numbers. Twenty-six players showed up at the Volunteers of America site, far surpassing TD Willie Hosford's expectations. In retrospect, there could easily have been two sections instead of only one. But having a one-section tournament where lower-rated players might get paired against strong opponents can bring out people's competitive best. I learned this the hard way in Round 1, when I *almost* lost to a Florida player rated over 1000 points below me.

Miles Gibson - Scott Varagona
(1073) (2258)
Azalea City Open, Round 1
Mobile, AL; March 26, 2022

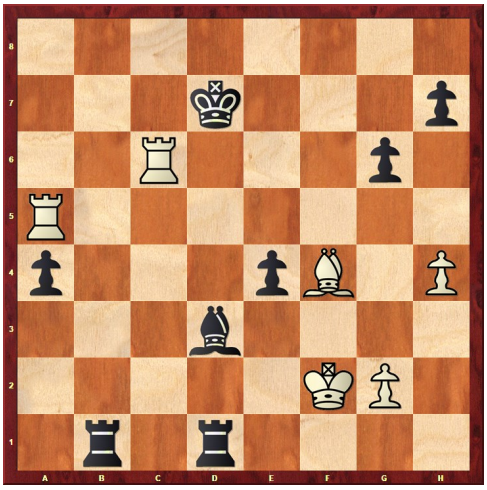
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Qc2 0–0 5.e3 d5 6.Nf3 b6 7.Bd3 Bb7 8.Ne5 c5 9.dxc5 bxc5 10.0–0 Nbd7 11.Nxd7 Qxd7 12.Ne2 Rfd8 13.b3 e5 14.Bf5 Qc6 15.f3 g6 16.cxd5 Qxd5 17.e4 Qc6 18.Bh3 Ba6 19.Be3 Bd3 20.Qb2 Nxe4 21.fxe4 Qxe4 22.Rf3 f5 23.a3 Ba5 24.b4 cxb4 25.axb4 Bxb4 26.Nc3 Qc4 27.Rc1 a5 28.Na4 Qe6 29.Nc5 Bxc5 30.Rxc5 e4??



I had dubiously sacrificed a piece for compensation earlier and the game was tense, but anything could have happened. Now, with this move, Black's king is too exposed, and I am simply lost. The computer evaluation went from "roughly equal" a few moves ago to... mate in 20 moves after 31.Rcxf5!. Also good, and the move I feared most during the game, was 31.Bxf5!, since 31...gxf5 32.Rg3+ would be fatal. **31.Rg3??** Missing his chance. Suddenly Black is doing well thanks to the following trick: **31...Rab8 32.Bxf5 Qxf5!** The threat of ...Qf1 mate preempts White's plans. **33.Qa2+ Qf7 34.Qxf7+ Kxf7**

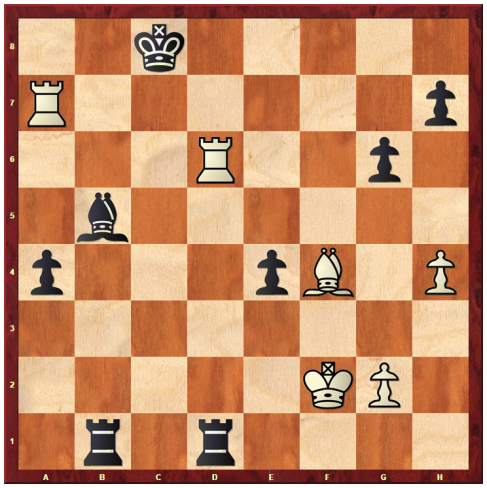


Black is two pawns up, but by this point I was low on time (and, more importantly, my nerves were shot). My technique in this endgame was so terrible that I even gave White another chance to win. **35.Rc7+ Ke6 36.h4 Rd7 37.Rc5 a4 38.Ra5 Bc2 39.Bf4 Rb1+ 40.Kf2 Rdd1?** For reasons which escaped me during the game, this throws away the win. This rook needed to stay at home to help block White's checks. **41.Rc3!** Now White's counterplay is serious. **41...Bd3 42.Rc6+ Kd7**



43.Rd6+ I was surprised my opponent didn't immediately play 43.Rc7+ Ke6 44.Rc6+, forcing a perpetual check. When I asked him about that after the game, he said he wasn't looking for a perpetual check. He wanted to win! I have to applaud his spirit, even if it did backfire in the end. **43...Kc8 44.Ra7**

Bb5?? The computer shows that 44...Rf1+! was correct, with an equal game. The text move gives White one last chance to win, if he finds something brilliant.



45.Rb6?? Finally, he falls into a trap. Instead, 45.Rc7+!! would have won. The computer found this instantly—but, in crushing time pressure, these two humans were oblivious. **45...Rf1+! 46.Kg3 Rb3+ 47.Kg4 Be2+** Winning a rook. Soon, White resigned: **0–1**.

That game is proof positive that ratings don't matter. As Caesar Lawrence always says, "You can beat anyone if you play good moves." Having taken a long break from OTB tournament chess (since last July, when the Covid surge was starting up again), I felt very rusty, and my opponent was playing way above his rating. I was lucky to escape. In comparison to this, all my other games were decently straightforward, and I breathed a sigh of relief when I reached 4-0.

The other game that stood out—and had the biggest impact on the final standings—was Brandon Alverson vs. Shawn Choi in the last round. Both players had 3 points, but Shawn had been outplayed in the early middlegame and his position went from bad to worse. His pawn structure was a mess; he was down a pawn or two; all the other pieces were traded off except for the queens, White's good bishop, and Black's terrible knight. And I do

The Azalea City Open: a Mobile tradition. Photo by Antics Editor.

mean terrible. Thanks to Black's doubled pawns on f7 and f6 and White's pawn on f5, Black's knight on h8 was trapped forever. If I'd been in Shawn's position, I probably would have just resigned. But Shawn kept playing, using his queen to harass White's slightly exposed king, and White's time pressure started becoming a factor. At some point, White won Black's f6-pawn and then played f5-f6, creating possible mate threats. However, at a critical moment, White missed a clear win and Black's knight could now finally jump to g6, coordinating well with Black's queen. Facing insurmountable time pressure, White blundered and Shawn found a royal fork, winning the game.

On left, Scott Varagona and Shawn Choi, tied for first with 4/4; on right, Brent Inman, "the Great American," Shawn's coach. Photo by Tom Denton.

I couldn't believe the comeback I had just seen. I would have bet thousands of dollars that Shawn was going to lose. Instead, he won and tied for first place, with a score of 4-0. This was a big milestone for Shawn as it was his first ever win in an open tournament in Alabama. He certainly earned some new fans after this performance, including me, and I hope to get to play him myself one of these days. (In the meantime, hopefully he will stop giving his teacher, NM Brent Inman, heart attack after heart attack with all these dramatic close calls…)

It was a pleasure to play in Mobile, but I will warn my fellow Expert/Master colleagues in Alabama: be careful. Those Mobile and Pensacola players are way stronger than their ratings say. It's a jungle down south! ■

2022 Alabama Senior Championship

by Scott Varagona

This year's Alabama Senior Championship took place on April 23, 2022, at the University of Montevallo. (The tournament was part of the "Montevallo Chess Festival" which also included the Falcon Chess Invitational and a Blitz tournament.) Caesar Lawrence was the TD. This was the first Senior Championship that has been held since before the pandemic, in 2019.

In a field of 15 players that included four Experts, in the end it was an underdog who took home the Senior Champion plaque. **Randy Cope**, rated 1812, defied the odds to win the 2022 Alabama Senior Championship with 3.5/4.

Tied for second place with 3/4 were **Charles Meidinger** (who took the 2nd place trophy) and **Brent Inman**, who was Senior Champion in 2019.

Class prizes were won by **Rhodes Peele** (best Class A/B), **Wendell Whitaker** (best Class C/D), and **Paul Laymon** (U1200).

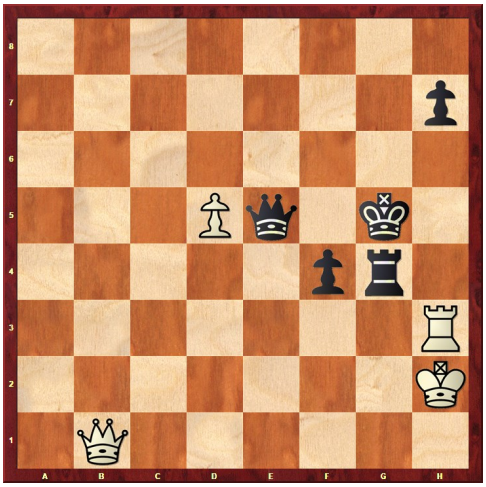
The pivotal game that led to Randy Cope's victory was his round 3 struggle with Tom Denton. Tom has sportingly contributed the notation of the game to the *Antics*. This topsy-turvy game has so many evaluation swings that I will not even try to annotate it. Here is the notation, for posterity:

Below: some of the prizewinners (left to right): Randy Cope, Paul Laymon, Wendell Whitaker, Rhodes Peele. Photos by TD Caesar Lawrence.

T. Denton (2041) - R. Cope (1812)
Alabama Senior Ch., Round 3
Montevallo, AL; April 23, 2022

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d3 Nc6 4.g3 Nf6

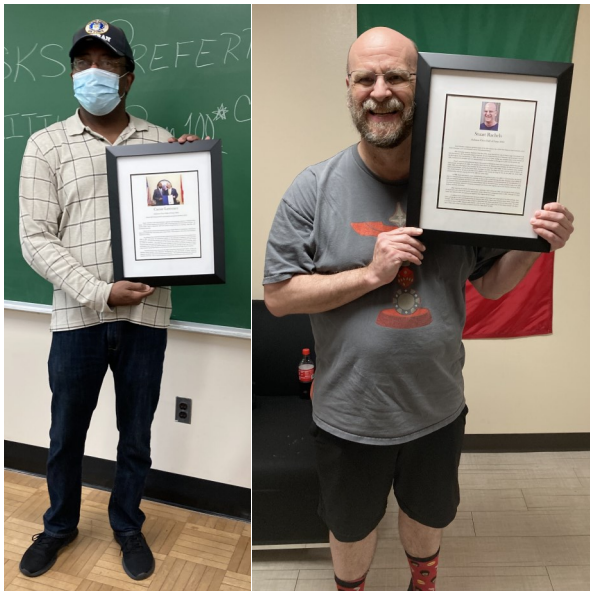
5.Bg2 g6 6.0–0 Bg7 7.c3 Bg4 8.Nbd2 0–0 9.Re1 Qc7 10.Qc2 Rac8 11.Nc4 Bxf3 12.Bxf3 b5 13.Ne3 b4 14.Bg2 bxc3 15.bxc3 e5 16.Nc4 Nd7 17.Be3 f5 18.f4 exf4 19.gxf4 Rce8 20.Rac1 Nf6 21.e5 dxe5 22.Bxc5 Ne7 23.Bd6 Qd7 24.fxe5 Nfd5 25.Qf2 Bh6 26.Rb1 Qe6 27.Rb7 f4 28.Bxd5 Nxd5 29.Bxf8 Rxf8 30.Qf3 Nxc3 31.Rc1 Nd5 32.Rcb1 Nb6 33.Nxb6 axb6 34.d4 Qxa2 35.R7xb6 Qd2 36.Qf2 Qd3 37.R6b3 Qe4 38.Re1 Qd5 39.Rf3 g5 40.h3 Ra8 41.Rd3 Ra2 42.Rd2 Ra3 43.Kh2 Qe6 44.Qg2 Rg3 45.Qf1 g4 46.d5 Qb6 47.Rb1 Qa7 48.hxg4 Rxg4 49.Qf2 Qf7 50.Rd3 Qf5 51.Rb8+ Bf8 52.Rh3 Qxe5 53.Rxf8+ Kxf8 54.Qc5+ Kg7 55.Qa7+ Kf6 56.Qb6+ Kf5 57.Qb1+ Kg5



After a few more moves, **White resigned (0–1)**.

At the start of this tournament, ACF officials surprised TD Caesar Lawrence with his 2021 Alabama Chess Hall of Fame plaque. Later in the day, Stuart Rachels showed up to visit friends playing in the championship, and he received his Hall of Fame plaque as well.

Above: the "barnburner" game, Denton-Cope, Round 3. Below: Hall of Famers Caesar Lawrence (left) and Stuart Rachels (right). Photos by Antics Editor.



2022 Montevallo Chess Festival: 2022 Alabama Senior Chess Championship -- Standings

#	Place	Name	ID	Rating	Post	St	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Total	T-Me	T-So	T-Cu	T-Op	T-Bl	Prize
1	1	Randy W Cope	11329462	1812	1863	AL	W14	W13	W6	D4	3.5	5.5	6	9.5	18	2	200.00/PLAQUE
2	2-3	Charles Meidinger	10237114	2000	1990	AL	L7	W8	W5	W9	3.0	6.5	8.5	6	22	2	75.00/TROPHY
3		Brent Inman	11337546	2095	2099	AL	D8	W12	D4	W6	3.0	6.5	7.5	7	20	2	75.00
4	4-5	Jeremiah Donahue	10020671	2000	1993	AL	W11	D5	D3	D1	2.5	9	10.5	7	26.5	2	
5		Rhodes Peele	10206294	1770	1777	AL	W10	D4	L2	W7	2.5	7.5	9.5	6.5	22	2	100.00/A/D
6	6-10	Thomas J Denton	10240352	2053	2029	AL	W9	W7	L1	L3	2.0	5	10.5	7	27.5	2	
7		Wendell Whitaker	13729200	1300	1443	AL	W2	L6	W11	L5	2.0	4.5	9	6	23	2	100.00/C/D
8		Aladdin Se Lateef	16736058	1715	1759	AL	D3	L2	W12	D11	2.0	4.5	8.5	4.5	18	2	
9		Scott J Heller	10034370	1693	1685	GA	L6	W14	W13	L2	2.0	3	6.5	5	17	2	
10		Paul K Laymon	12610673	1127	1184	AL	L5	L11	W14	W13	2.0	2.5	5.5	3	14	2	100.00
11	11-12	Robert Presswood	12031640	1622	1600	GA	L4	W10	L7	D8	1.5	6	8.5	3.5	20.5	2	
12		Gerald A Squires	12243330	1976	1946	GA	H---	L3	L8	B---	1.5	2	5	1.5	11.5	1	
13	13	Randall D Tew	12808659	948	963	AL	W15	L1	L9	L10	1.0	5.5	9	4	17.5	2	
14	14-15	Carlos T Matos	12419880	1171	1142	AL	L1	L9	L10	U---	0.0	4	7.5	0	17.5	1	
15		Scott Howar Inman	14473594	972	939	GA	L13	U---	U---	U---	0.0	0	1	0	4	1	

Senior Championship crosstable provided by TD Caesar Lawrence.

Left: Charles Meidinger, 2nd place trophy winner. Photo by submitted by Caesar Lawrence.
Right: Three old pals. Left to right: Tom Denton, Stuart Rachels, Brent Inman. Photo by Gerald Squires. ■

Alabama Chess Happenings

from various contributors

- Paul Nager: "I am proud to announce that the team I coach, **UMS-Wright in Mobile**, won the U800 Division of chess nationals in Memphis [in April 2022]!" We hope to publish an article by Paul about his team's experience in an upcoming *Antics*.

- Jonathan Rasberry: "Ranae Bartlett's **Madison City Chess League** did well at the All-Girls' national chess tournament [in April 2022] in Chicago, with a team winning 1st place and a couple of the kids finishing with individual medals." We look forward to seeing an article about this result in the *Antics* as well.

- The Falcon Chess Invitational, Alabama's annual "super-tournament," took place on April 23 as part of the Montevallo Chess Festival. This 8-player tournament had an average rating of approximately 2155. The co-winners were **Yury Barnakov** and **Scott Varagona**, both with 3/4. Second place was shared by Matthew Puckett and Isaac Snow, each with 2.5/4.

- The 2022 Montevallo Blitz tournament was won by **Samuel Baskarraj** with a commanding score of 11/12.

- **Dr. Cathlena Martin**, Associate Professor of Game Studies & Design at the University of Montevallo (and a colleague of Dr. Scott Varagona), visited Bobby Fischer's grave during a trip to Iceland.

Left: Scott Varagona (left) analyzes a game with spectator IM Stuart Rachels. Standing behind Stuart in the background is the Falcon co-winner, Yury Barnakov. Photo by Gerald Squires. Right: Dr. Cathlena Martin at Bobby Fischer's grave in Iceland. (I was kidding when I asked her to visit this grave during her trip, but then she surprised me with this photograph! -Ed) ■

In Memory: Dr. Rose Marie Stutts

by Caesar Lawrence

I just received news that Dr. Rose Marie Stutts passed on Tuesday, February 8, 2022.

She taught underprivileged children in Tuscaloosa how to play chess. Marie founded the Freedom Chess Academy! The Black Warrior Chess Championship was one of her favorite chess endeavors.

I cherish the times we worked together to promote chess. In recent years, her West Alabama Family chess students competed at some of my Scholastic (K-12) chess tournaments. And, they took home the Team Trophy sometimes.

She was a teacher. She shared her time and chess knowledge for the enrichment of children!

RIP Marie… ■

The ACF mourns the passing of Dr. Rose Marie Stutts. According to her obituary, she was 73 years old. In this photo (from her Facebook profile), Dr. Stutts can be seen with the special service award she received from the USCF in 2014.

Dr. Stutts, you definitely made a difference in Alabama chess. I enjoyed talking to you at chess camps and tournaments back in the day. I will remember you as Tuscaloosa's "Chess Lady"! -Ed

The Vulcan: Crosstables

submitted by Caesar Lawrence

2022 VULCAN: V_PREMIERE -- Standings

#	Place	Name	ID	Rating	Post	St	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Total	T-Me	T-So	T-Cu	T-Op	T-Bl	Prize
1	1-2	Yury Ana Barnakov	12964843	2271	2279	AL	W7	W8	D2	W5	3.5	8.5	10.5	9	27.5	2	200.00/1st
2		Bill Melvin	12406133	2213	2228	AL	W13	W6	D1	W8	3.5	8	9	9	23	2	200.00
3	3-4	Douglas Stewart	20109893	1829	1896	MS	W16	W12	L5	W9	3.0	6.5	7.5	8	20	2	100.00
4		Victor Lundy	15542913	1662	1741	AL	B---	L5	W17	W14	3.0	4	4	6	11	1	100.00
5	5-7	Sherwood Dong	14582202	2056	2053	AL	D9	W4	W3	L1	2.5	9	11	7	29	3	
6		Charles Meidinger	10237114	2000	1997	AL	W10	L2	W15	D7	2.5	8	9	6.5	22	2	

7		Noah S Hamilton	16808335	1821	1861	GA	L1	W11	W16	D6	2.5	7.5	8.5	5.5	19.5	2	
8	8-11	Zachary I Snow II	15336543	2104	2096	AL	W11	L1	W10	L2	2.0	5.5	10.5	6	24	1	
9		James Mcca Taylor	14710068	1777	1820	GA	D5	W17	D12	L3	2.0	4.5	8	6	22	1	
10		Steven Pan	15963582	1683	1744	AL	L6	W14	L8	W17	2.0	3	6	4	16.5	2	
11		Nathan Yamaguchi	13271522	1782	1776	IL	L8	L7	B---	W15	2.0	3	5.5	2	15	1	
12	12-13	Aaron DeCord	15675377	2124	2102	AL	W14	L3	D9	U---	1.5	3	6	5	16	2	
13		Daniel Jer Siegel	12488561	1811	1786	AL	L2	D15	L14	B---	1.5	2	5.5	1.5	14.5	2	
14	14-16	Samuel Baskarraj	16665811	1810	1782	AL	L12	L10	W13	L4	1.0	5	7.5	2	16.5	2	
15		Scott J Heller	10034370	1679	1673	GA	D17	D13	L6	L11	1.0	3	5.5	3.5	12	2	
16		Tyler Schmuggerow	14822494	1674	1655	GA	L3	B---	L7	U---	1.0	2.5	5.5	2	13.5	1	
17	17	Steve A Perry	12395299	1877	1813	MS	D15	L9	L4	L10	0.5	5	7.5	2	19.5	3	

2022 VULCAN: V_RESERVE -- Standings

#	Place	Name	ID	Rating	Post	St	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Total	T-Me	T-So	T-Cu	T-Op	T-Bla	Prize
1	1-4	Abhiraj Sarkar	16489263	1396	1535	AL	W14	W4	D3	D2	3.0	9	10.5	8.5	23.5	3	100.00/1st
2		Douglas Strout	13592632	1500	1530	AL	W13	D5	W6	D1	3.0	8	8.5	8	24.5	2	100.00
3		Cody Limbau Smith	17348382	1552	1564	AL	D8	W11	D1	W9	3.0	7	8.5	7	23	2	100.00
4		Robert Presswood	12031640	1606	1608	GA	W15	L1	W10	W5	3.0	7	8	7	19	2	100.00
5	5-7	Christopher Boothe	13829674	1307	1432	AL	W12	D2	W7	L4	2.5	8.5	9	7.5	22.5	2	25.00
6		Shannon L Baker	12511372	1379	1464	AL	W9	D7	L2	W12	2.5	7.5	8	6.5	20.5	2	25.00
7		Gabe A Clements	30438873	1544p	1534	AL	W10	D6	L5	W8	2.5	7	8.5	6.5	22.5	2	
8	8-11	Roger Ruiz	16753842	1350	1384	AL	D3	D14	W11	L7	2.0	4	8.5	5.5	19	2	
9		David Toledo	17092705	1560	1533	TN	L6	W15	W13	L3	2.0	3.5	7	5	15.5	2	
10		Jim O'Nea Griffin	12711496	1328	1339	AL	L7	W12	L4	B---	2.0	3	6	3	14.5	1	
11		Indigo Maasai Daniels	30096534	1200	1208	AL	B---	L3	L8	W13	2.0	2.5	5.5	4	14.5	2	
12	12-13	Phillip O' Taylor	12335320	1519	1440	GA	L5	L10	B---	L6	1.0	4	6.5	1	17	1	
13		Bishop Herrington	16770652	1280	1232	AL	L2	B---	L9	L11	1.0	3.5	6.5	2	17	1	
14	14	Kristian K Jordan	15193161	1565	1532	AL	L1	D8	U---	U---	0.5	2	5	1.5	14	1	
15	15	Thomas Gilbreath	12621562	1426	1398	AL	L4	L9	U---	U---	0.0	2	5	0	12	1	

2022 VULCAN: V_AMATEUR -- Standings

#	Place	Name	ID	Rating	Post	St	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Total	T-Me	T-So	T-Cu	T-Op	T-Bla	Prize
1	1-2	Claiborne C Davis	30212708	1059p	1189	AL	W18	W5	W3	W9	4.0	8	9	10	25	2	112.50/1st
2		Zach M Simmons	30162239	1119	1213	GA	W14	W11	W10	W4	4.0	7	9	10	26	2	112.50
3	3-6	Jethro Mont Jones	16850787	1159	1158	AL	W6	W12	L1	W11	3.0	8.5	10.5	8	27	2	
4		Mason La Williams	12689065	1177	1175	AL	W19	W7	W9	L2	3.0	8.5	9.5	9	24.5	2	
5		Mitchell Ra Jones	30190103	769	942	AL	W13	L1	W17	W10	3.0	7.5	8.5	7	23	2	50.00
6		Landon Lagg	17154148	753	903	MS	L3	B---	W13	W12	3.0	6.5	6.5	5	17	1	50.00
7	7-8	Ryan Zhu Wu	17108840	816p	814	AL	W17	L4	W18	D8	2.5	6.5	7.5	6.5	20.5	2	
8		David L Robinson	30280808	312p	600	AL	L9	W20	W19	D7	2.5	5.5	6	5.5	15.5	2	50.00
9	9-16	Alton Summers	30185392	1032p	1013	AL	W8	W15	L4	L1	2.0	5.5	11.5	7	29.5	2	
10		Whitney Wadsworth	17241595	911	909	AL	W16	W21	L2	L5	2.0	5	10.5	7	23	2	
11		Alex Zhuoyue Zhu	16667817	815	921	AL	W23	L2	W15	L3	2.0	5	10	6	23	2	
12		Justin Tarbox	12850422	824p	806	AL	W22	L3	W14	L6	2.0	4.5	7.5	6	17	2	
13		Paul K Laymon	12610673	1128	1055	AL	L5	W16	L6	B---	2.0	4.5	7.5	3	15	1	
14		Nathan Lou Curtis	30410738	568p	593	AL	L2	W22	L12	W17	2.0	3	7	4	19	2	
15		Nathaniel Siegel	30598316	unr.	770	AL	W20	L9	L11	W22	2.0	2.5	4.5	5	14	2	
16		Matthew Thomas Jarr	30605191	unr.	779		L10	L13	W22	W20	2.0	2	4	3	11	2	
17	17-21	Caleb Siegel	30598350	unr.	553	AL	L7	W19	L5	L14	1.0	5.5	8.5	3	18.5	2	
18		Elijah L Posey	30167626	530p	579	AL	L1	W23	L7	L19	1.0	4.5	8.5	3	17.5	3	
19		Shambeau Das	30441650	792p	710	AL	L4	L17	L8	W18	1.0	4.5	7.5	1	20.5	2	
20		James McHugh	30107722	892	772	AL	L15	L8	B---	L16	1.0	4	6.5	1	13.5	2	
21		Phillip R Cochran	30287939	698	680	AL	B---	L10	U---	U---	1.0	0	2	3	7	0	
22	22-23	Shamik Das	30605299	unr.	189	AL	L12	L14	L16	L15	0.0	6	8	0	18	2	
23		Charles Alston III	12811418	1195	1099	AL	L11	L18	U---	U---	0.0	1	3	0	9	1	

The Lost State Champions: Part II

by Scott Varagona

It's been two years since I published my new version of the Alabama State Chess Champions list in "the Lost State Champions" (*Antics* Spring 2020). Since then, lots of additional resources for research about Alabama chess history have appeared. Just when I thought my list was finished, some new and unexpected pieces of information popped up—information which, in some cases, conflicted with other information we already had. Yikes! Suddenly, a few entries on the list from the late 1960s to 1970 were cast into doubt. My mind could not be at peace until I felt sure I had found the truth.

Thankfully, after another year of research and thought, I believe that I've finally resolved all the contradictions. Now I have a new version of the state champions list that we can feel very certain is correct. So, once again: please follow me on a journey into the distant history of the Alabama Chess Championship. We'll do our best to get to the bottom of all this…

First, let's recall the names on Bobby Edwards' original list—and my revised 2020 list—for 1967-1972.

Original List (from 1997)
1967: Marty Appleberry
1968: Charles Cleveland
1969: Milan Momic & Charles Irvine
1970: Charles Irvine
1971: Don L. Whaley
1972: Ken Williamson

Revised List (from 2020)
1967: Charles Irvine
1968: Charles Cleveland
1969: Milan Momic & Charles Irvine
1970: Don L. Whaley
1971: Ken Williamson
1972: Ken Williamson

My investigation started (or rather, restarted) because of one loose end from my 2020 list—a small loose end, but a pesky one. I had no original citation for the 1969 Alabama State Championship. All I had was the entry from Bobby Edwards' old list, which said that Milan Momic and Charles Irvine were the co-champions. Since I knew Bobby got a few other entries on his list wrong, I really needed *proof* for the 1969 slot.

I had never found any primary sources that mentioned Momic winning in 1969, so I tried looking deeper into Charles Irvine's chess career instead. However, Irvine had

dropped off the radar and moved out of state decades ago, and sources with information about him were relatively scarce. Still, hopefully I would be able to find something useful somewhere. I got way more than I bargained for: instead of just finding written information about Charles Irvine, I found… the man himself!

I had stumbled upon Charles Irvine's chessgames.com player profile. In his bio, he identified himself by name, and he said he "Won Alabama State Championship 4 times and was briefly a chess master in my salad days." I saw he had been active in some chessgames.com forums relatively recently, so I messaged him—and, to my delight, he responded. What luck! At last, I could interview one of the most successful state champions from the '60s and '70s: this would be an invaluable resource. Here are the key excerpts from our correspondence:

SV: We are trying to verify our state champions list. Could you confirm which years you became a state champion? According to the sources I have, it was in 1967, 1969, 1973, and 1974. (Also, in 1969, were you co-champion with Momic?)

CI: I kept no records but I say the years were 1969, 1970, 1973, 1974. I believe Marty Appleberry won 1967. […] I thought I won outright 4 times but I cannot back this claim up.

SV: The reason I thought you were the champion in 1967 was because of the report on p. 325 of this Chess Review. [I link to the report in the November 1968 Chess Review, which stated: "Sponsored by the Birmingham Chess Club, the Alabama Open was run in two sections, the Open and the Reserve. C. Irvine won the first-named group with 4½-2½, ahead of runnerup M. Momic, 3½-3½. Also with 3½-3½ was C. Edwards, who placed third on a tiebreak. The Reserve Section went to P. Hargett. The total entry list comprised 22 players."]

Although this report came out in 1968 (not 1967), Alabama tournament reports often got printed only after a very long delay. […] I have not found anything on 1969 except for what Bobby Edwards'

Charles Irvine at the 1974 state championship. (Photo from October 1974 Antics.)

original list said. […] If you won in 1970, then I am going to have to try again to see where Don Whaley should be. […] Because of Antics reports, we know 100% for sure that you won in '73 and '74. (And in '74, you got a perfect 7-0 score!)

CI: [Referring to the tournament described in the above *Chess Review* report] This was the first time I won against Milan, I got an upset chess trophy for beating him. However, this was not a state championship that I am aware of.

So, allegedly, the tournament that *Chess Review* talked about did indeed happen… but it wasn't really the state championship?!

Oh dear. My excitement had turned to horror. I thought I had those difficult years in the late '60s and early '70s figured out, but now I was more confused than ever. Did Irvine correctly remember which exact years he won? It was a long time ago, after all... On the other hand, you can't trust something just because it's in print. Maybe some of my written sources were wrong, and Irvine was right.

After this bombshell interview, I went back to the drawing board. Off and on for a whole year, I looked again at all my copies of *Chess Life*, *Chess Review*, and *Tennessee Chess News* from that era, and tried to figure out what was up. I had a theory, but no conclusive evidence at first. My search eventually took me to the Alabama Department of Archives and History in Montgomery, where I looked through old newspapers on microfilm. Hunting for what seemed like a "needle in a haystack," I found some 1960s & 1970s articles from *the Birmingham News* and *the Huntsville Times* that named various state champions. Now, at last, I feel satisfied that I've sorted it all out.

Long story short: it appears that the report I referenced from *Chess Review* that claims to be about the "Alabama Open" is, in fact, incorrect. Irvine did not win the 1967 championship. Instead, it was Marty Appleberry (a strong Huntsville Expert of the day) who won. Moreover, references I found in newspapers on microfilm confirm that Irvine did win the championship in 1969 and 1970. This means Irvine was correct, and he did win (with clear first, as far as I can tell) four times: in 1969, 1970, 1973, and 1974.

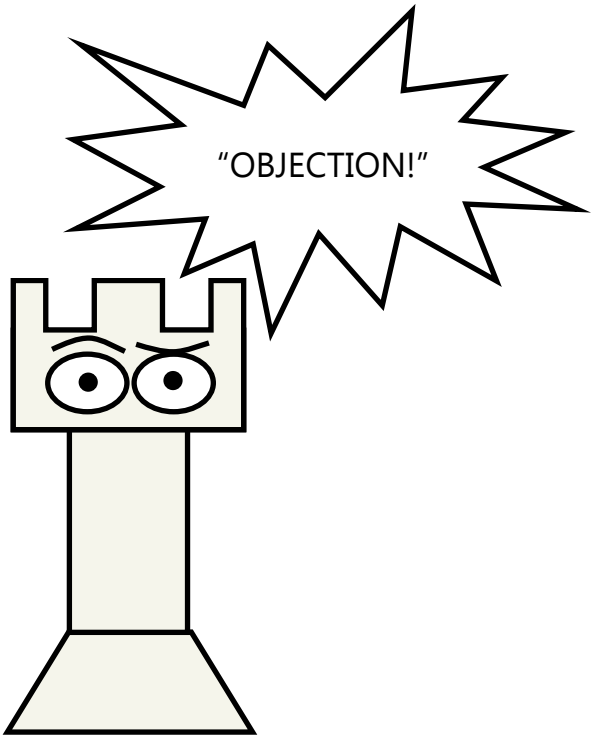
Now, if you are interested—or, if you're a skeptic like me who simply *must* see the evidence before you accept this—here are all the details on the years 1967-1972.

1967

Based on the new evidence that has come to light, I now believe **Marty Appleberry** was the 1967 Alabama State Champion. (The original state champions list by Bobby Edwards had Marty in this spot, so it appears that Bobby had this right all along.)

Originally, I thought that Bobby's '67 entry was incorrect because the aforementioned *Chess Review* report said Charles Irvine was the winner of the "Alabama Open." Since we knew this "Alabama Open" wasn't the one from 1968, it seemed the report could only be referring to the Alabama Open from 1967. Granted, the outcome of the tournament looked suspicious—for Irvine to win clear first in a 7-round tournament with a measly 4.5/7, and for Momic to come in second with 3.5/7, would be truly bizarre—but the report said point-blank that Irvine was the winner of the Alabama Open. Moreover, no other report available to me in 2020 said anything to indicate that Marty Appleberry had won in '67.

However, I can now prove that the aforementioned *Chess Review* report has multiple factual errors that cast the whole thing into doubt. The report is certainly not talking about the true '67 Alabama Open. In fact, the report seems to be some sort of editorial mistake: it contains details from both the 1968 Alabama Open in Birmingham



and the 1968 Midsummer Open in Huntsville, all "Frankensteined" together. I know it sounds unbelievable—it took a very long time for me to realize it myself—but consider the following evidence.

Note that, in this report, the number of players across both the Open and Reserve sections (22 players total) does not match the number of players in the 1967 Alabama State Championship listed in the "Events Rated" section on p. 98 of the March 1968 *Chess Life* (18 players total). Rather, it matches the Alabama State Championship of 1968 listed on p. 26 of the January 1969 *Chess Life* (22 players). Now look at the rest of the details in

Chess Review's report on this mysterious "Alabama Open." The prizewinners in the Open and Reserve sections—as well as their final scores—exactly match what happened in Huntsville's 1968 Midsummer Open in July, as we see from reports in *Chess Life* (March 1969, p. 89), *Tennessee Chess News* (September 1968, p. 2), and the *Georgia Chess Letter* (August 1968, p. 41). In this Midsummer Open, Irvine won with 4.5 points, Momic and C. Edwards tied for second with 3.5 points, and P. Hargett won the Reserve section. Coincidence? I think not!

Also note that, if the March 1968 rating list in *Chess Life* is correct, Momic did not play in the '67 state championship at all. This is additional evidence that the prizewinner details in *Chess Review*'s report cannot really be about the '67 Alabama Open. Rather—considering the timing of the report, and the uncanny resemblance of the details—surely these prizewinners must have been the ones from the 1968 Midsummer Open from July. (Not to mention, since the Midsummer Open was just a 5-round event, the fact that 4.5 was a winning score, and second place was 3.5, etc., now makes perfect sense.)

How did this weird mistake happen? Most likely, *Chess Review* editors accidentally mashed together two different reports—one about the '68 state championship in Birmingham, and one about the Midsummer Open in Huntsville. It's too bad: one small error in their magazine in '68 caused untold confusion and heartache for me, over 50 years later…

Come to think of it: the idea of Charles Irvine winning in 1967 was always very, *very* unlikely. Why? I could find no rating for Charles Irvine—not even a provisional one—in any *Chess Life* rating lists prior to the one from March 1968 that included the 1967 Alabama State Championship. Because the Alabama State Championship of 1967 would have been one of Charles Irvine's first (if not *very* first) rated tournaments ever, it seems extremely unlikely that Irvine won this event. Especially since he has no recollection of having done so. (Just think: if, as an unrated player and a complete unknown, you show up out of the blue and win the entire state championship on the first try, surely you would *never* forget that. And nor would anybody else.)

So, if it's just too unbelievable that Irvine won in 1967—and the *Chess Review* article that said Irvine won has been debunked—then how do we know that Marty Appleberry won? After I published my previous article on the Lost State Champions, the *Antics* archive has expanded to include many more volumes from the 1970s. I found

some reports from these years that credited Marty Appleberry as having been an Alabama State Champion in the past. See, for example, the *Antics* of March 1975, p. 2, and June 1977, p. 3. (Several newspaper articles I saw on newspapers.com also call Appleberry a former Alabama state champion, although they sometimes get the specifics very wrong.) Anyway, if Marty really was a state champion, there is no year other than '67 where this could have reasonably occurred. We know from other reports that it didn't happen earlier in the '50s or '60s. It didn't happen in '68, nor (as we will see) in '69. In '70, on Labor Day weekend, Appleberry was playing in the Tennessee Open instead of the Alabama Championship (see *Tennessee Chess News*, September 1970, p. 33). In '71, Appleberry was listed as a Georgia resident instead of an Alabama resident on *Chess Life* rating lists, so he would not even have been eligible that year. And finally, from '72 onward, we have *Antics* records that prove Appleberry failed to win any other Alabama State Championship. So, by process of elimination, '67 is the only year he could have possibly won. (By the way, Appleberry was a rising Expert at the time, and already one of the most dominant players in the state. The only stronger player, the master Milan Momic, did not play in the 1967 Alabama State Championship according to the *Chess Life* March 1968 rating list. So, it is very plausible that Appleberry won in '67.)

Marty Appleberry: one of the state's top players of the late '60s and early '70s. (Photo from December 1975 Antics.)

Appleberry's winning in '67 is also consistent with statements in the March 1975 *Antics*, and in some other sources, that say Appleberry was state champion when he was 16. According to his FIDE player card, he was born in 1950, so he would have been roughly 16 or 17 when he won the state title in September of '67.

At first, I was still a little skeptical: according to the October 1966 *Chess Life* (p. 240), Appleberry was indeed state *junior* champion in '66, which initially made me wonder if the statements about him being an "Alabama State Champion" were incorrect. What if people had heard he was a former champion, but they were mistaken about what type? However,

over and over again, in various sources, he is referred to not as having been junior champion, but simply "Alabama state champion." So now I am inclined to believe that he was not only *junior* champion in '66, but also the full state champion in '67.

Finally, although I found no article in the newspapers in 1967 that explicitly named Appleberry as the reigning champion, I did find an ad in the September 15, 1967 *Huntsville Times* (p. 4) for a "Chess Spectacular" event at a mall. The ad said that, at this event, people could come play chess or receive lessons from members of the Huntsville Chess Club—including "the State Chess Champion." Bingo! This ad, together with all the other evidence I'd gathered, allows me to conclude with near certainty that the true champion of '67 was Huntsville's Marty Appleberry.

1968

We already knew that **Charles Cleveland** was the sole winner in 1968. Still, because so much of the late '60s and early '70s is shrouded in mystery and confusion, it makes me feel better to provide additional sources as further proof. See, for example, *the Birmingham News*, September 11, 1968 (p. 14); *Chess Life*, November 1968 (p. 422); and *Chess Review*, January 1969 (p. 4).

1969

According to an article in *the Birmingham News* of September 2, 1969 (p. 6), **Charles Irvine** was the sole winner in 1969, with a perfect 7-0 score. Milan Momic came in second, winning 6 of his 7 games. This newspaper article is the first clear documentation of the '69 state championship that we have uncovered. (When I found this on the microfilm at the state archives, I felt like I'd found the Holy Grail.)

Bobby Edwards had listed both Milan Momic and Charles Irvine as champions in the 1969 slot; however, in view of the above source, I'm removing Momic's name from this entry. (Why did Bobby put both names on his list? Since he didn't cite his sources, I'm not sure. This is a wild guess, but maybe Bobby saw a report like the one in the August 20, 1970 *Birmingham Post-Herald* that previewed the 1970 Alabama Championship. This article predicted that Momic and Irvine would be the most serious contenders for the title in 1970—and so, Bobby may have incorrectly deduced that these two players had both been champions in the prior year, 1969.)

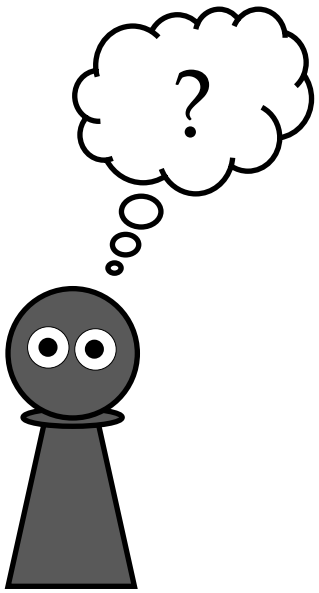
1970

The winner this year was in fact **Charles Irvine**. *The Huntsville Times* (September 9, 1970, p. 4) states that, in 1970, Irvine defended his title from

1969 and had won two years in a row. This is consistent not only with Charles Irvine's own memory, but also Bobby Edwards' original list. Together with the wins in 1969, 1973, and 1974, this 1970 win makes Irvine a four-time state champion, as expected.

There is a problem, though: on the June 1971 *Chess Life* list of state champions (p. 327), which should list the Alabama state champion from 1970, we see not Charles Irvine, but Don L. Whaley. How strange! A player could only get on that state champions list if Alabama chess officials went out of their way to report their name to *Chess Life*. So, to me, for the longest time, Whaley's presence on that list seemed like incontrovertible evidence that he was the 1970 champion. I was really hung up on this.

How to settle the contradiction?



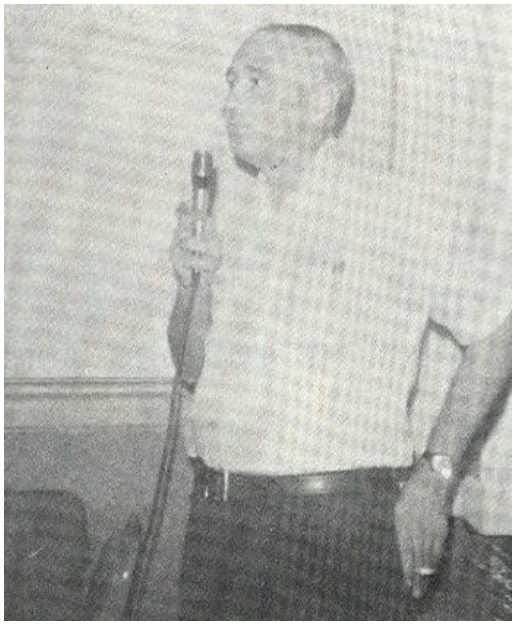
Consider this: because Whaley was rated in the 1700s at the time (see *Chess Life* rating lists throughout the year 1970), and the Amateur Section rating cutoff at the 1970 Alabama State Championship was 1800 (see August 1970 *Chess Life*, p. 471), Whaley probably won the Amateur Section, not the Open section. Perhaps there was some confusion or miscommunication involved in the state's correspondence with *Chess Life*. The *Chess Life* state champions list sometimes mentioned different kinds of state champions: for example, Mike Lucas was listed as the Alabama Junior Champion in the *Chess Life* of June 1971. So, because the 1970 Alabama Championship had three different parts to it—the Open, the Amateur, and the Speed Championships—*Chess Life* could have mixed names up somehow. Or, they could have misinterpreted Whaley's winning the Amateur Championship as meaning he had become *the* state champion, etc. Although we still cannot be certain what happened, this sort of explanation does seem plausible. (I would add that strange errors were frequently occurring in the *Chess Life* state champions list in those days; I have learned to second-guess the list time and time again. There are many *Chess Life* magazines in the '70s where the state champion entry for Alabama is obviously wrong.)

While it's not impossible that Don Whaley played in the Open section in 1970 and somehow had the tournament of his life (e.g., perhaps tying for first), it seems highly unlikely. Aside from that somewhat dubious state champions list in *Chess Life*, no original sources I've found from the '60s or '70s have ever mentioned that Whaley was a state champion. (The September 9, 1970 *Huntsville Times* article I referenced had said Irvine won the title, but mentioned nothing about a tie for first, or a co-champion, etc.) We must also consider the strengths of the players. In 1970, Irvine was already an NM, had just been ranked as one of the top ten juniors in the country, and even played in the U.S. Junior Championship that summer. Meanwhile, Don Whaley—although he was one of the stronger Birmingham players at the time—was rated only in the 1700s. And Whaley had been in that rating range for a while. It makes far more sense to think that Whaley was the Amateur champion, and Irvine was the sole Open champion.

So, in my view, the evidence that Charles Irvine was the sole Open champion in 1970 is convincing. We should remove Don L. Whaley's name from this slot, but include a note about him in the references for future researchers. Perhaps some further documentation of the 1970 state championships (such as crosstables) will come to light one day, and people will be able to see for sure what happened in the other sections of the tournament.

1971

The reasons I gave in my 2020 article that **Ken Williamson** was the '71 champion are still valid. I would just like to add one new piece of evidence: when Ken won the '72 championship, the October 1972 *Antics* remarked that "Ken Williamson again took the State title home to Huntsville, going undefeated." The word "again" strongly indicates that Ken had won in the previous year, '71. (From context, it's unlikely the author of the report



Ken Williamson—a state champion and an ACF president. (Photo from October 1974 Antics.)

was referring to Ken's other state championship from way back in '57.) Little else is known about the '71 championship; I hope that, someday, tournament crosstables will be found.

1972

We now have the original report on this year's championship from the October 1972 *Antics*. **Ken Williamson** was indeed the winner, as expected.

With that, I believe that the mystery of 1967-1972 is finally solved.

My apologies to the late Bobby Edwards: it seems he got even more of the entries correct on his original list than I had given him credit for. In some cases, the one who was actually going astray was me. I can't be too hard on myself, though: as I said before, the conclusions I draw are only as good as the sources they are based upon… Since I discovered that some of my sources had misled me, and that put me in an extra paranoid mood, I decided to go back and give additional documentation for all the pre-*Antics* era state championships, whenever possible. If multiple sources, e.g., *Chess Life*, *Chess Review*, and newspaper articles (such as from *the Birmingham News* or *the Birmingham Post-Herald*) all agree on who the state champion was, then we can feel very sure that we got that entry right.

However—on a philosophical note—I guess it's impossible to be 100% certain of any event that happened in the distant past. Even if we have, e.g., three reliable reports that all say the same thing, it's still theoretically possible that all three reports were based on an original source that was incorrect! However, there is no point in worrying about that sort of thing. What matters for me is that I now feel *at peace* with our new state champions list. After a lot of research and thought, I have fully satisfied myself that it is correct. While I wouldn't bet my life on it, I would bet $1000 that it's correct, if you will. And that is all one can ask for when trying to figure out our ancient history.

The next few pages contain my updated state champions list with all the references and explanation included. Should anyone find some additional documentation to confirm or disprove any of these entries, I would love to see it. If any minor adjustments to the list need to be made later, I will put a brief report about that in future *Antics*. In the meantime, I am happy and relieved to be finished with this project. I feel that I have now done my very best to find all the lost Alabama State Champions. ■

Alabama State Champions List

Updated in 2022 by Scott Varagona

Currently, all issues of *Chess Life (CL)*, *Chess Review (CR)*, and *Chess Life & Review (CL&R)* are at:
https://new.uschess.org/chess-life-digital-archives/

Back issues of *Alabama Chess Antics* may be found at:
https://alabamachess.org/antics-magazine/

Back issues of *Tennessee Chess News* may be found at:
http://tnchess.us/?page_id=688

Newspaper articles may be found on newspapers.com or on microfilm at various libraries.

Starting from 1992, championship crosstables may be found by searching for players' names at:
http://www.uschess.org/msa/Index.php

In years with multiple winners, the trophy winner is listed first, unless otherwise specified.

Year & Champion(s)	Sources
2021 Chibuzo Ilonze	Fall 2021 *Antics*, p. 1, p. 4-11
2020 Scott Varagona	Fall 2020 *Antics*, p. 4-13
2019 Scott Varagona / Matthew Puckett	Fall 2019 *Antics*, p. 6-16
2018 Scott Varagona / Tyler Freeman	Fall 2018 *Antics*, p. 4-15
2017 Scott Varagona	Fall 2017 *Antics*, p. 4-15
2016 Bill Melvin	Fall 2016 *Antics*, p. 4-6
2015 Scott Varagona	Fall 2015 *Antics*, p. 4-9
2014 Stephen W. Adams	Winter 2014 *Antics*, p. 2-3; Spring 2015 *Antics*, p. 4-7. (Adams was the top Alabama resident, behind Ron Burnett of TN. See crosstable on uschess.org.)
2013 Scott Varagona	Fall 2013 *Antics*, p. 2, p. 8-10
2012 Bryan Tillis / Charles Meidinger	Fall 2012 *Antics*, p. 1-5. (Both players finished behind Ron Burnett of TN. See crosstable on uschess.org.)
2011 Will Stevenson	Fall 2011 Winter 2012 *Antics*, p. 2-3
2010 Emory Tate	Fall 2010 *Antics*, p. 2-4
2009 Bradley Denton / Will Stevenson	Fall 2009 *Antics*, p. 2-6. (Bradley Denton won the trophy on tiebreaks according to Will Stevenson.)
2008 Scott Varagona / Joe Jurjevich / Brent Inman / Alex Weiner	Fall 2008 Winter 2009 *Antics*, p. 2-4. (A blitz round-robin tournament was used for tiebreaks to determine the trophy winner; see http://www.uschess.org/msa/XtblMain.php?200809218481.4 for the tiebreaker crosstable.)

2007 Scott Varagona	Fall 2007 *Antics,* p. 1, p. 4-6; Spring Summer 2008 *Antics,* p. 3-6. (Varagona tied for first with two out-of-state residents, Stephen Muhammad of GA and Bradley Denton of MS. Although Bradley Denton would later become an AL resident, he was listed as a MS player when this tournament was played. -Varagona)
2006 Joe Jurjevich / Brent Inman / Calvin Bomar	Fall 2006 *Antics,* p. 4-7, p. 13
2005 Scott Varagona	Fall 2005 *Antics,* p. 2-13. (Varagona was top Alabama resident, finishing behind Stephen Muhammad of GA.)
2004 Gerald Larson / Ozgur Aktunc	Fall 2004 *Antics,* p. 2-16; Summer 2005 *Antics,* p. 2-14
2003 Joseph Marcrum	Fall 2003 *Antics,* p. 2-15, p. 16
2002 Joe Jurjevich / Charles Meidinger / Scott Varagona	Fall 2002 *Antics,* p. 8-14. (These players finished behind Ziatdinov of AZ, who came in first, and S. Muhammad of GA who came in second. Although Jurjevich is listed in the crosstable as being from NC, he had recently moved back to Alabama and was deemed eligible. -Varagona)
2001 Bill Melvin	November 2001 *Antics,* p. 3-6
2000 Bill Melvin	November 2000 *Antics,* p. 5-9
1999 Andy Reeder / Matthew Puckett	November 1999 - January 2000 *Antics,* p. 14-16. (Reeder won the trophy on tiebreaks according to Matthew Puckett.)
1998 Bill Melvin	November 1998 - January 1999 *Antics,* p. 1, p. 5-9, p. 15-16
1997 Bill Melvin / Andrew Whatley	November 1997 - January 1998 *Antics,* p. 1, p. 12, p. 14, p. 15-17. (Bill Melvin won the tiebreaks, according to Bill.)
1996 Brent Inman / Rhodes Peele	November 1996 *Antics,* p. 9-15. (Brent Inman won the trophy, according to Brent.)
1995 Kyle Therrell / Bill Melvin / Andrew Whatley	Crosstable: http://www.uschess.org/msa/XtblMain.php?199509047980.1 (Note: Although he is now listed as a TN player, Andrew Whatley was an Alabama resident at the time. Kyle Therrell won the speed chess tiebreaker, but Bill Melvin says he now has the trophy because Kyle sold it to Bill(!) for $20.)
1994 Charles Meidinger	November 1994 *Antics,* p. 1, p. 10, p. 14
1993 Scott Godfrey	Crosstable: http://www.uschess.org/msa/XtblMain.php?199309062480.1 (Note: Although he is now listed as a VA player, Scott Godfrey must have been eligible for the Alabama state title at the time.)
1992 Kyle Therrell / Charles Meidinger / Bill Melvin	Unlabeled (Fall) 1992 *Antics,* p. 4, p. 6-7, p. 10-11
1991 Hisham Sunna / Charles Meidinger	volume 1, 1992 *Antics,* p. 1, p. 14-18
1990 Bill Melvin	volume 1, 1991 *Antics,* p. 1, p. 6-8; volume 3, 1991 *Antics,* p. 21-22
1989 Joe Jurjevich	November 1989 *Antics,* p. 1, p. 12-14, p. 16-18
1988 Mark Walton	December 1988 *Antics,* p. 1, p. 5-9

1987 Kyle Therrell / Tom Denton	May 1988 *Antics,* p. 1, p. 10-14. (Kyle Therrell received the trophy on tiebreaks according to Tom Denton. Note that Kyle's name used to be "Dana.")
1986 Stuart Rachels	December 1986 *Antics,* p. 1, p. 6-9
1985 Stuart Rachels	November 1985 *Antics,* p. 3-5
1984 Stuart Rachels	November 1984 *Antics,* p. 1, p. 3-6, p. 8-9, p. 14-15
1983 Stuart Rachels / Tom Denton	November 1983 *Antics,* p. 1, p. 4-7
1982 Kyle Therrell / Stuart Rachels	November 1982 *Antics,* p. 1, p. 3-4; the list of state champions in the September 1984 *Antics,* p. 28, seems to suggest the given tiebreak order.
1981 Kyle Therrell	November 1981 *Antics,* p. 1, p. 14-21
1980 Steve Hudson / Joe Jurjevich	November 1980 *Antics,* p. 1, p. 4-8
1979 Steve Hudson	November 1979 *Antics,* p. 1, p. 6-9
1978 Robert Jurjevich	November 1978 *Antics,* p. 9-13
1977 Dr. Fredrich Bittner	December 1977 *Antics,* p. 11-19
1976 Steve Hudson	November 1976 *Antics,* p. 6-12
1975 Elias Antonas	October 1975 *Antics,* p. 1-6
1974 Charles Irvine	October 1974 *Antics,* p. 1-7
1973 Charles Irvine	September 1973 *Antics,* p. 3-6
1972 Ken Williamson	October 1972 *Antics,* p. 2-3; *the Montgomery Advertiser,* September 5, 1972, p. 1; *CL&R,* March 1973, p. 159. (Note: *CL&R* states that "The 1973 Alabama State Champion is Ken Williamson." However, since this report was printed in March 1973--and the 1973 championship would not happen until September--*CL&R* really meant that Williamson won the 1972 championship.)
1971 Ken Williamson	*Tennessee Chess News,* January 1972, p. 1; also, October 1972 *Antics,* p. 2 states: "Ken Williamson again took the State title home to Huntsville..." which strongly suggests that he had won the previous year, i.e., 1971. (Note: Bobby Edwards' previous state champions list had Don L. Whaley in the 1971 slot, but now that seems incorrect based on our new sources for this entry. It is true that Don L. Whaley was listed on the *CL&R* state champions list in January 1972, p. 36; however, it appears that his name was simply reprinted by *CL&R* from the previous year, as the magazine would often do. Whaley's name first appeared in *CL&R*'s state champions list in June 1971, p. 327, prior to the 1971 Alabama state championship; that would suggest that Whaley was 1970 champion. However, we now have good reasons to believe that Charles Irvine was 1970 champion, so the appearance of Whaley's name on *CL&R*'s state champions list seems to have been an error from the start. For more details, see the entry for 1970 and the discussion in "The Lost State Champions: Part II," in Spring 2022 *Antics*.)

1970 Charles Irvine	"Irvine Retains State Crown," *the Huntsville Times,* September 9, 1970, p. 4; Correspondence with Charles Irvine via chessgames.com, 2021. (Note: The state champions list in *CL&R,* June 1971, p. 327 listed Don L. Whaley for Alabama, which would suggest that Whaley was the 1970 state champion. However, in view of the above sources, I believe Whaley's inclusion in *CL&R*'s list was a mistake. Since Whaley was rated in the 1700s, and the rating cutoff for the Amateur Section of the 1970 Alabama State Championship was 1800, there is a good chance that Whaley was the Amateur Champion in 1970, not the Open Champion. We remark that the *CL&R* state champions list often contained mistakes in other years as well. See "The Lost State Champions: Part II," in Spring 2022 *Antics* for more details.) Other information about the 1970 championship, and a photo of Irvine, is in "Chess Fight Moves Slow, Deliberate," *the Birmingham News,* September 6, 1970, page A-39, but this source does not mention who won.
1969 Charles Irvine	"Perfect Score - Huntsville Senior New Chess Champ," *the Birmingham News,* September 2, 1969; "Irvine Retains State Crown," *the Huntsville Times,* September 9, 1970, p. 4; Correspondence with Charles Irvine via chessgames.com, 2021. (Note: Bobby Edwards' original list also included Milan Momic in this slot, but that appears to have been an error.)
1968 Charles Cleveland	*CL,* November 1968, p. 422; *CR,* January 1969, p. 4; "Chess Champ Says He's No Genius," *the Birmingham News,* September 11, p. 14; "Georgian Places Third in 1968 Alabama Open," *Georgia Chess Letter,* December-January 1968 (Vol. 9, no. 2), p. 8
1967 Marty Appleberry	March 1975 *Antics,* p. 2; June 1977 *Antics,* p. 3; "Chess Spectacular," *the Huntsville Times,* September 15, 1967, p. 4; Correspondence with Charles Irvine via chessgames.com, 2021. (Note: there was confusion over this entry because of a misleading report in the November 1968 *CR,* p. 325, that named Charles Irvine as the winner of an Alabama Open; however, that report has been shown to contain multiple errors and it does not seem to be talking about the '67 Alabama State Championship at all. Instead, the other sources listed above give us good reasons for believing Marty Appleberry was the '67 champion. For a full explanation for this entry, see "the Lost State Champions: Part II" in Spring 2022 *Antics*.)
1966 Milan Momic	*CL,* October 1966, p. 240; *CR,* February 1967, p. 35
1965 Gordon Bates	*CL,* November 1965, p. 247; *CL,* December 1965, p. 261; *CR,* December 1965, p. 356; "Club Spurns Big Eye, Concentrates on Chess," *Birmingham Post-Herald,* August 11, 1966, p. 26
1964 Brad Gambrell	*CL,* October 1964, p. 248; *CR,* December 1964, p. 356
1963 Milan Momic	December 1988 *Antics,* p. 13; *CL,* October 1963, p. 260; *CR,* November 1963, p. 324

1962 Milan Momic	May-July 1997 *Antics,* p. 25; *CL,* February 1963, p. 44; "State chess tournament opens tonight," *the Birmingham News,* August 30, 1963, p. 22 (Momic is named as the current champion, i.e., from 1962, before the 1963 championship is set to begin).
1961 Brad Gambrell	*CL,* October 1961, p. 284; *CR,* November 1961, p. 325; "State chess meet will be held here," *the Birmingham News,* August 26, 1962, p. A-4 (Gambrell is called the "reigning state champion" from 1961 before the 1962 championship starts).
1960 Dr. Rodney Baine	*CL,* Vol. XV, No. 4 (October 20, 1960 edition), p. 8; *CR,* November 1960, p. 323; "Dr. Rodney Baine--Alabama College official takes chess championship," *the Birmingham News,* September 6, 1960, p. 4; "Chess Championship Won by Dr. Baine," *Birmingham Post-Herald,* September 6, 1960, p. 16
1959 Frank Di Paula	*CL,* Vol. XIV, No. 15 (April 5, 1960 edition), p. 1; "Tuskegee Doctor, Birmingham Man Share Top Alabama Chess Honors," *Birmingham Post-Herald,* September 8, 1959, p. 19. (Note: Brad Gambrell tied for first, but Di Paula won the tiebreaker. The reports only name Di Paula as champion; perhaps co-champions were not recognized then the same way they are now. However, by the ACF's standards today, Gambrell would have been recognized as a co-champion.)
1958 Brad Wade	*CL,* Vol. XIII, No. 4 (October 20, 1958 edition), p. 1; *CR,* November 1958, p. 324; "Brad Wade New Champ of Alabama Chessmen," *the Birmingham News,* September 2, 1958, p. 20; "Brad Wade Captures Alabama Chess Crown," *Birmingham Post-Herald,* September 2, 1958, p. 12
1957 Ken Williamson	*CL,* Vol. XII, No. 4 (October 20, 1957 edition), p. 1; *CR,* November 1957, p. 324; "Mobile Native - Memphian Wins Chess Meet Here," *Birmingham Post-Herald,* September 3, 1957, p. 21
1956 Michael J. Deleanu	*CL,* Vol. XI, No. 2 (September 20, 1956 edition), p. 1; *CR,* November 1956, p. 324; "Chess Tourney Opens Saturday," *Birmingham Post-Herald,* August 30, 1957, p. 19 (Deleanu is identified as the "reigning champion" before the 1957 championship begins). (Note: in his 1997 state champions list, Bobby Edwards placed Brad Gambrell in this slot--probably because *CL*'s report on the 1957 Alabama State Championship mentioned in passing that Gambrell was the "defending 1956 champion." However, *CL*'s note from 1957 seems to be mistaken; all the other sources cited here seem more plausible, and they identify Deleanu as the top Alabama resident/state champion of 1956.)
1955 Lt. Edmund Godbold	*CL,* Vol. X, No. 7 (December 5, 1955 edition), p. 1; *CR,* November 1955, p. 325; "Soldier Wins Chess Title," *Birmingham Post-Herald,* September 6, 1955, p. 22
1954 Gordon Bates	*CL,* Vol. VIII, No. 23 (August 5, 1954 edition), p. 1; *CL,* Vol. VIII, No. 24 (August 20, 1954 edition), p. 7; *CR,* May 1954, p. 133; *CR,* August 1954, p. 227; "Fourth Round Completed in State Chess Tourney," *Birmingham Post-Herald,* September 5, 1955, p. 3 (In this report from 1955, Gordon Bates is referenced as the previous year's champion, i.e., from 1954).

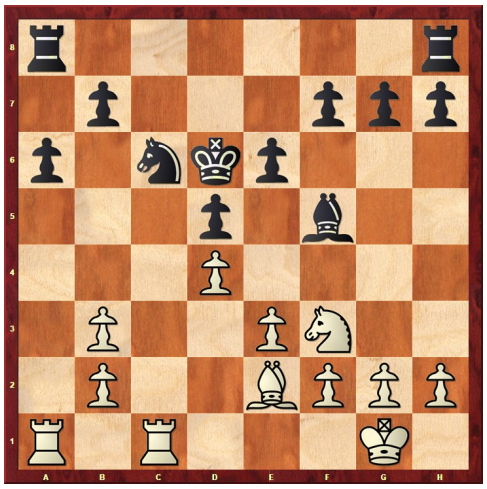
Karagianis-Strout

by Doug Strout

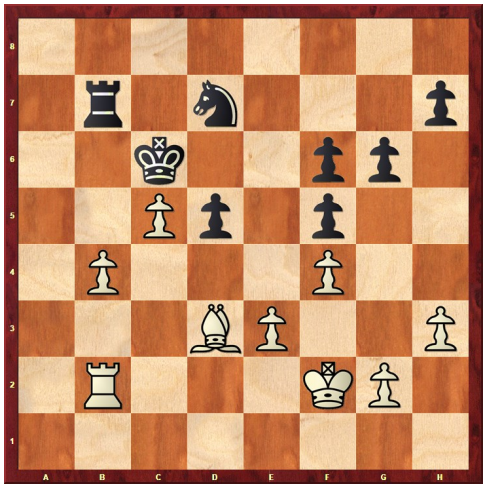
P. Karagianis - D.L. Strout
(2188) (1600)
USCF Online Blitz G/5
Chess.com, 12-31-2021

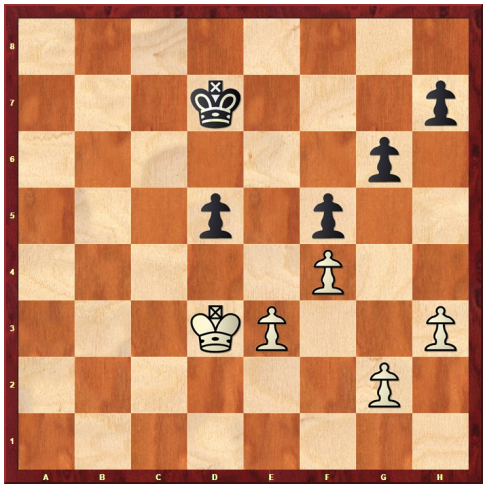
This is a USCF-rated Game/5 blitz on chess.com. The opponent is NM Pete Karagianis of Illinois.

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 Bf5 A fairly harmless Queen's Gambit Declined Slav. I've seen enough pushes of c5 by white that I might have played ...dxc4 by now, but I'm just developing pieces. **5.cxd5 Nxd5** He goes for the exchange, and I put the question to the c3 knight. **6.Qb3 Qb6** ...Qb6 is my stock answer to Qb3 in the Slav. Yes, I am giving white a lot of choices as to move order here, but none of those choices scare me. **7.Nxd5 Qxb3 8.axb3** Nc7+ as an in-between move loses to ...Kd8, so he has to re-take the queen immediately, which gives me time to take the knight. **8...cxd5 9.Bf4 a6 10.e3 e6 11.Be2 Nc6 12.0–0 Kd7** I do this in the Slav instead of castling when I think I need the extra defender to pieces on c-file. **13.Rfc1 Bd6 14.Bxd6 Kxd6**



I finally complete my development, followed by a trade of the dark-square bishops with advancement of my king. All good. **15.h3 Rac8 16.Rc5 f6** Taking away Ne5, because I don't need the knight intruding while I am dealing with rooks on c-file. **17.Rac1 Ne7 18.b4 Rc6 19.b5 Rxc5 20.dxc5+ Kc7** Rook combat was going to occur, and the two sides fought to control the rules of engagement. My king gets pushed back. **21.bxa6 bxa6 22.Bxa6** Whoops. Dropped a pawn, and he now has connected passers on b/c. **22...Rb8 23.Nd4 Nc6 24.Nxf5 exf5 25.Bd3 g6 26.Rb1 Ne5 27.Be2 Nd7 28.b4 Kc6 29.Bd3 Ne5 30.Bf1 Rb7 31.f4 Nd7 32.Bd3 Nb8 33.Kf2 Nd7 34.Rb2**





34…Nxc5 He just gave me a tactical shot to get the pawn back, with tempo against the d3 bishop. **35.b5+ Kd6 36.Ke2 Nxd3 37.Kxd3 Kc5** Trading off that pesky bishop AND advancing my king? Fine with me. **38.Rc2+ Kxb5 39.Kd4** I took the pawn but let his king get inside. Fortunately, I have a pawn holding e5. **39...Rd7 40.Rc8 Kb6 41.Rf8 Kc6 42.Rxf6+** Well, so much for holding e5. My problem was that, while I could have played ...Rd6 to protect f6, I was concerned that would give him a shot at my g/h pawns. **42...Rd6 43.Rf8 Re6 44.Rc8+ Kd6 45.Rd8+ Kc6 46.Rh8 Re4+ 47.Kd3 Re7 48.Rd8 Rd7 49.Rxd7 Kxd7** After all that rook dancing, we swap them off. My king retreat to d7 for the re-take does not hurt me in playing the opposition game now K vs. K. **50.g4 fxg4 51.hxg4 Ke6** Did I make a mistake here not playing ...h6 to set up ...h5 and get a passed pawn? **52.g5 Kd7 53.Kd4 Kd6 54.Kd3 Kd7 55.Kc3 Kc6 56.Kb4 Kb6 57.Kc3 Kc6 58.Kd3** Kings dance around for a bit, and the draw is agreed. **58...Kd7 ½–½**

(Editor's Note: It just wouldn't be a proper Doug Strout game without a king-and-pawn ending that ends in a draw! :) *Just kidding. Thanks, Doug, for your continued support of the Antics.)* ■

ALABAMA CHESS ANTICS

Email:

Alabama.Chess.Editor@gmail.com

www.alabamachess.org

Alabama Chess Federation

Upcoming Tournaments

See www.alabamachess.org for updates on these and other events.

June 24	**RCA Summer Blitz Fun - June**	**Montgomery, AL**
June 25	**2022 Huntsville Classic**	**Huntsville, AL**
July 9	**2022 Clarence Kalenian Classic**	**Dothan, AL**
July 16	**2022 Birmingham Classic**	**Helena, AL**
July 22	**RCA Summer Blitz Fun - July**	**Montgomery, AL**
July 23	**Alabama Dual-Rated State Ch.**	**Montgomery, AL**

The **Alabama Chess Federation** (ACF) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation and the United States Chess Federation affiliate for the state of Alabama. Our goal is to promote chess in this area for the benefit of all Alabama players. Toward that end, we provide advertising and other assistance for rated tournaments, as well as support for scholastic chess programs around the state.

To submit articles, pictures and games to the *Antics*, email the *Antics* editor at

Alabama.Chess.Editor@gmail.com

Games in .pgn format are strongly preferred.

Please contact **jonathan.rasberry@alabamachess.org** if you are interested in helping with the Alabama Chess Federation.

All chess diagrams in this issue were produced using *Fritz*, a program by *ChessBase*.

ACF OFFICERS

President:	Jonathan Rasberry
Vice President:	Alex Del Rio
Secretary:	Bill Melvin
Treasurer:	Jeff Byrd
Scholastic VP:	Todd Guthrie
Public Relations VP:	Kristian Jordan
Antics Editor:	Scott Varagona
Webmaster:	Jonathan Rasberry
Web Content Mgr.:	Derek Miller
Member Admin.:	Jonathan Rasberry